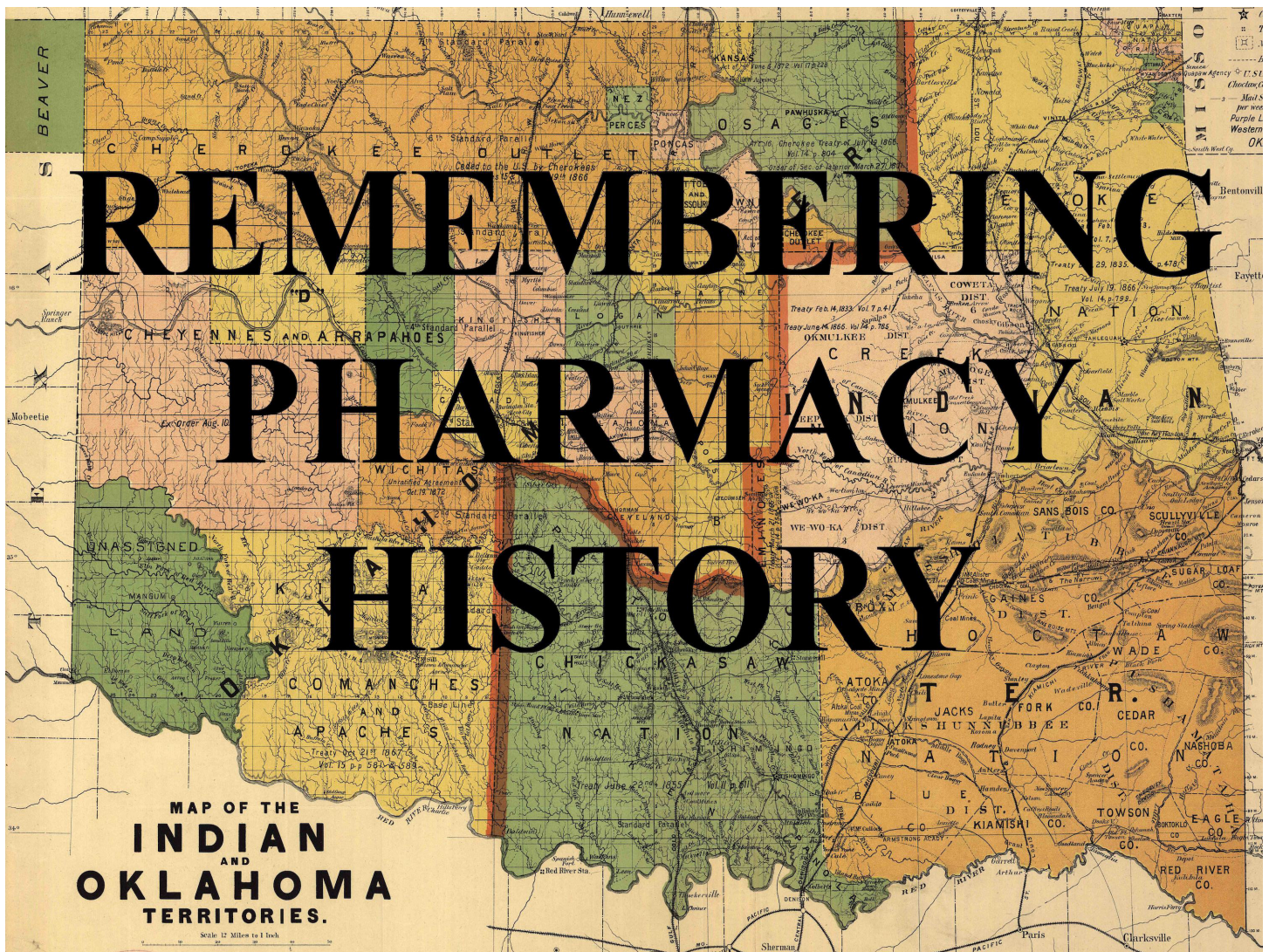


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PHARMACY FAMILIES OF OKLAHOMA The Shannon Family



*Cover Logo based on an
1892 map of Indian and
Oklahoma Territories in the
United States Library of
Congress.*

PHARMACY FAMILIES OF OKLAHOMA

The Shannon Family

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William Orrick and Ober Lee Shannon

He was referred to as Orrick and became a pioneer physician and pharmacist in the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. Born in Sarcoxie, Jasper County, Missouri, on October 15, 1853, to William and Arabella Francis (Neale) Shannon, Orrick grew up in a mercantile environment. His father William, a merchant, had been in born about 1825 in Maryland and married Orrick's mother Arabella after moving to Missouri. William is listed as a merchant in Sarcoxie in the 1850 census. Arabella was born in Kentucky in 1830 and moved with her family to Missouri, marrying William in Johnson County, Missouri, on December 13, 1849. Her father was a wealthy river boat captain, banker, and farmer. The Shannon and Neale families were early day pioneers in the state of Missouri.



William Orrick Shannon. From Kelly Shannon.

Orrick's father William joined the Confederate Army during the American Civil War, serving as a sergeant in an Arkansas unit. After the war, the family moved to Texas and then, before 1880, to Marrs Hill Township, Washington County, Arkansas. By this time, Orrick had started out on his own.

On August 31, 1873, in Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas, Orrick married Edith "Edie" Ellen Lewis. Edie had just turned seventeen years of age, having been born on June 11, 1856, in Fayetteville. Her parents, Henry and Mary Elizabeth (Massey) Lewis, were married in Washington County in 1847. Henry was born on November 23, 1822, in Floyd County, Kentucky, and Mary in about 1830 in Wayne County, Indiana, both moving to Washington County at young ages. Henry joined the Union Army and died during the American Civil War. In 1866, Edie's mother Mary Elizabeth married Augustus Clayton Pool, a widower with five children. Mary died on June 4, 1878.

The first child of Orrick and Edie, Ober Lee, was born in a log cabin near Durham, Washington County, Arkansas, on August 4, 1874. Two other children, Cora Priscilla and Allen DeWitt, were born in Washington County before 1880.

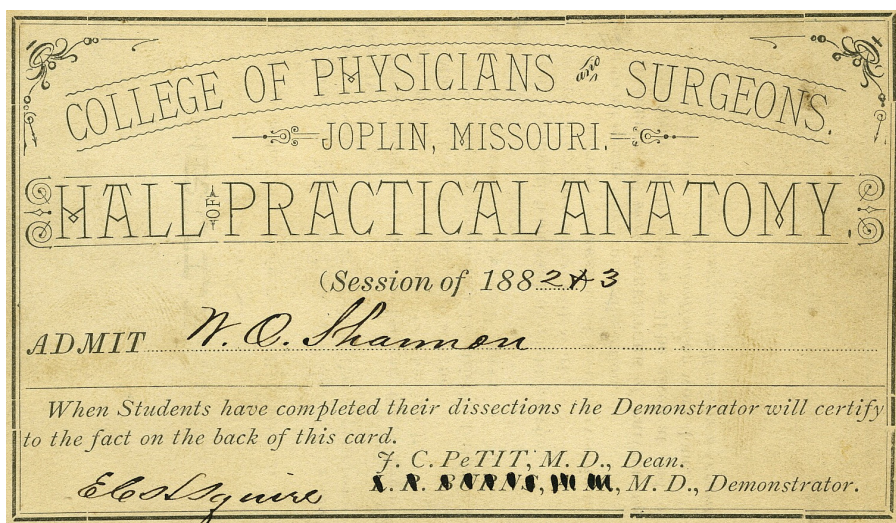
During the early days of their marriage, Orrick worked as a farm hand and sold an "electric belt" that was a popular remedy at the time. In summer of 1876, the Shannon family passed through San Francisco on the railroad seeking fortune. Ober Lee was only about two years old at the time, but later recalled that the seats on the train were very hard and uncomfortable. The family moved on to the Portland, Oregon, region where Orrick found a job cradling wheat on a farm belonging to one of Edie's uncles. He was a strong young man, six feet and six inches tall, weighing about 240 pounds, with enough muscle to handle the demanding work. Nevertheless, they apparently got "home sick" and returned to Arkansas in the fall of 1877.



Children of Orrick and Edie Shannon, ca. 1885. From left are Allen DeWitt, Ober Lee, and Cora Priscilla. From Kelly Shannon.

Orrick found work and living quarters in a water mill on the Osage River, west of Elm Springs in Washington County. During this time, Orrick began learning about medicine from a physician living in Elm Springs. He soon settled the family closer to Elm Springs and started practicing medicine. After learning medicine by experience for a few years, Orrick decided to take some classes. Accordingly, he attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri, and graduated with an M.D. degree on March 9, 1883.

By the time Orrick graduated, Edie had a well-advanced case of tuberculosis and, hoping to find a healthier and more prosperous environment, they decided to move to Texas. The route they took brought them to Cox's Mill, Blue County, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, in December of 1883. There was no local physician there at the



Admission card for W. O. Shannon to attend anatomy class in medical college at Joplin, MO, 1882-1883. From Kelly Shannon.

W. O. SHANNON, M. D.,

PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,

COX'S MILL,

BLUE COUNTY, C. N.

*Tenders his Professional Services to
the Citizens of the Surrounding Vicin-
ity. Calls promptly attended to. Terms
Cash.*

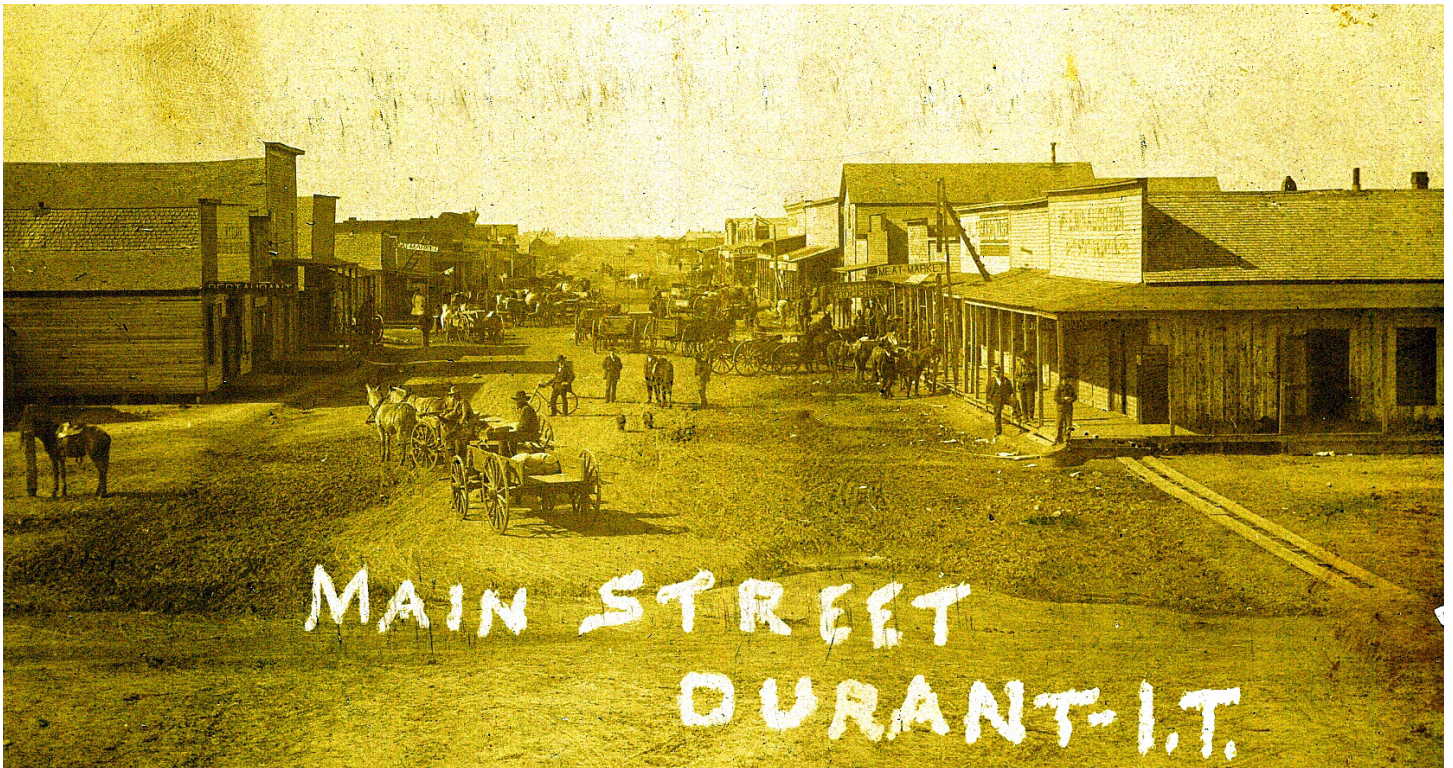
W. O. Shannon's professional card at Cox's Mill, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. From Kelly Shannon.



William Orrick Shannon with his second wife Rose (Wright) and their son, known as "Pet." From Kelly Shannon.



Ober Lee Shannon. From Kelly Shannon.



Photograph of Main Street in Durant, 1896. From Kelly Shannon.



Inside the Shannon drug store in Durant. Ober Lee Shannon is standing behind the counter on far right. From Kelly Shannon.

time and Orrick was enticed by the local residents to remain with them. Hugh Cox, local land owner and merchant, built a house for the family to live in on the condition that Orrick would set up an office in his store. Accepting the deal, Orrick and his family moved into their new house in March of 1884.

Not long after they decided to stay in the Choctaw Nation, Edie gave birth to another son, William Orrick, Jr., who died in December, 1884, at six months of age. Edie's health rapidly deteriorated after that and she died in January of 1885, being buried in Cox's Chapel Cemetery. In April of 1885, having been widowed and left with three small children, Orrick married sixteen year old Rose L. Wright, a daughter of William Norcross and Catherine (Sandidge) Wright.

Needing more space for his growing herd of cattle and horses, Orrick moved to a farm about a half mile east in late 1885, still continuing his medical practice. Within a few years, he began to look for a more productive place to practice medicine and decided to settle in nearby Durant. In March of 1889, the Shannon family moved into Durant where Orrick had purchased a house near the train depot and set up an office containing a large stock of drugs. This was the beginning of the Shannon Drug Store in Durant. It was the only drug store in a town consisting of about 150 people.

Orrick's oldest son, Ober Lee, began working in the drug store as soon as they moved to Durant. By the early 1890s, Ober had saved a few dollars and invested in miscellaneous items, including toys and fishing tackle, for



Certificate of charter membership in the Indian Territory Pharmaceutical Association issued to W. O. Shannon, 1895. From Kelly Shannon.

sale in the store. In the summer of 1893, they moved the store to a larger lot and expanded the drug stock. The store soon became known as W. O. Shannon & Son and carried furniture and other miscellaneous items in addition to drugs. All the while, Ober Lee was learning about pharmacy.

In May of 1895, Orrick traveled to Muskogee, Creek Nation, Indian Territory, to attend the inaugural meeting of the Indian Territory Pharmaceutical Association, held on the 23rd. He continued to participate actively in the organization, presenting papers at the annual meetings. As examples, he spoke on "Should Indian Territory Druggists Handle Alcohol" in 1896 during a time in which alcohol was banned by federal law. He reminisced in 1900 by presenting a paper entitled "The Druggist of Twenty Years Ago Compared to the Practical Pharmacist of Today." Orrick was also an active member of the Indian Territory Medical Association and was elected vice president in 1902.

In 1900, a fire destroyed the Shannon Drug Store in Durant. They soon rebuilt, but the partnership between Or-

rick and Ober Lee was dissolved. Ober continued the business, but sold it in 1905 to N. C. Moore. In the meantime, Ober became an active member of the Indian Territory Pharmaceutical Association, joining in 1900 with membership number 149. He also became a licensed pharmacist when the pharmacy law was enacted in 1904 by the United States Congress. On October 18, 1904, he was issued certificate number 240 by the Indian Territory Board of Pharmacy. In 1908, Ober was given certificate number 782 by the newly formed Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy. By this time, Orrick was focused on his medical practice and did not choose to obtain a pharmacy license from either entities.

On April 11, 1904, Orrick's second wife, Rose, died. She and Orrick had three children of their own, William "Pet," Ida Florine, and Sally Rose. He next married Ella (Hightower) Collier, who died in 1916 after they had four children, William Orville, Carrie, Lola, and Louella. Orrick's fourth wife was Cora Crouch, who was twenty-six years of age when they married. He was sixty-two at the time and died on August 26, 1919, after the couple moved to Denton, Denton County, Texas. They had no children. Orrick is buried in Highland Cemetery, Durant, Bryan County, Oklahoma.



Members of the Indian Territory Pharmaceutical Association meeting in Sulphur, 1906. Ober Shannon (face circled) is fourth from bottom right. From Kelly Shannon.

Get Busy

If you owe me anything come in and settle. I need the money and your accounts are due. If I have accommodated you, return the compliment.

I have sold my drug stock to Mr. N. C Moore, who will continue the business at my old stand where you will find me or my books at all times.

Thanking you for past favors, etc., I am
Your Friend,

O. L. Shannon

The Drug Man
Who "Owes."

Notice by Ober Shannon that he sold his drug store to N. C. Moore. From The Durant Daily Times, October 6, 1905.



Durant home of Ober Lee and Rennie Shannon family, 1001 West Main Street. From Kelly Shannon.

By the time Ober Lee sold the Shannon Drug Store, he was married with five children and living in a house he had built in Durant during the spring of 1896. Ober and Rennie Taylor were married on January 1, 1896, and this was their first home. Unfortunately, one of their children, known as "Little Ruel" died there in 1902 at six weeks of age. In September of 1907, they moved to a new home at 1001 West Main Street in Durant where eight more children were born to the couple. Another of their sons, Orrick Lee, died in 1912 at seventeen years of age.

Rennie Taylor Shannon was a member of the Choctaw Nation with Dawes enrollment number 11054. Ober Lee was, consequently, an "inter-married" citizen of the Choctaw Nation and has Dawes enrollment number 750. When Ober sold the Shannon Drug Store in 1905, his time was occupied with filing and improving land allotted to Choctaw citizens, which also included five of his children by the end of the enrollment period. Improvements on the land allotted to the Shannons consisted of building houses and barns, drilling water wells, and cultivating the land. This is where much of his time was consumed up to the summer of 1920.

In 1920, Ober decided that he now had enough time to get back into the drug business. Consequently, he formed a partnership with Samuel W. Stone and Frank Perkins and started the Shannon Drug Shop. A son born to Ober Lee and Rennie in 1922 was named Sam Stone Shannon as a result of the respect they had for one of his partners. Samuel W. Stone, however, left as a partner in about 1921 when he became Executive Vice President of the Commercial National Bank in Durant. Ober Lee continued to operate the Shannon Drug Shop in Durant, using his motto "Purity and Integrity," until 1933 when the poor business climate created by the so-called "Great Depression" led him to close the store.

Ober Lee and his family were very highly respected in Durant as well as in the state of Oklahoma. Ober was a

member of the Masonic Lodge, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows Lodge, and Woodmen of the World. He was active in civic affairs and served as alderman in Durant for many terms and as mayor of the town from 1935 to 1937.

Ober died in Durant on April 10, 1955. He and Rennie had celebrated their fifty-ninth wedding anniversary on January 1 of that year with their twelve surviving children present. At the time of his death, he was the Bryan County voter registration officer. Rennie passed away on November 18, 1960. They are buried in Durant's Highland Cemetery.

Acknowledgements

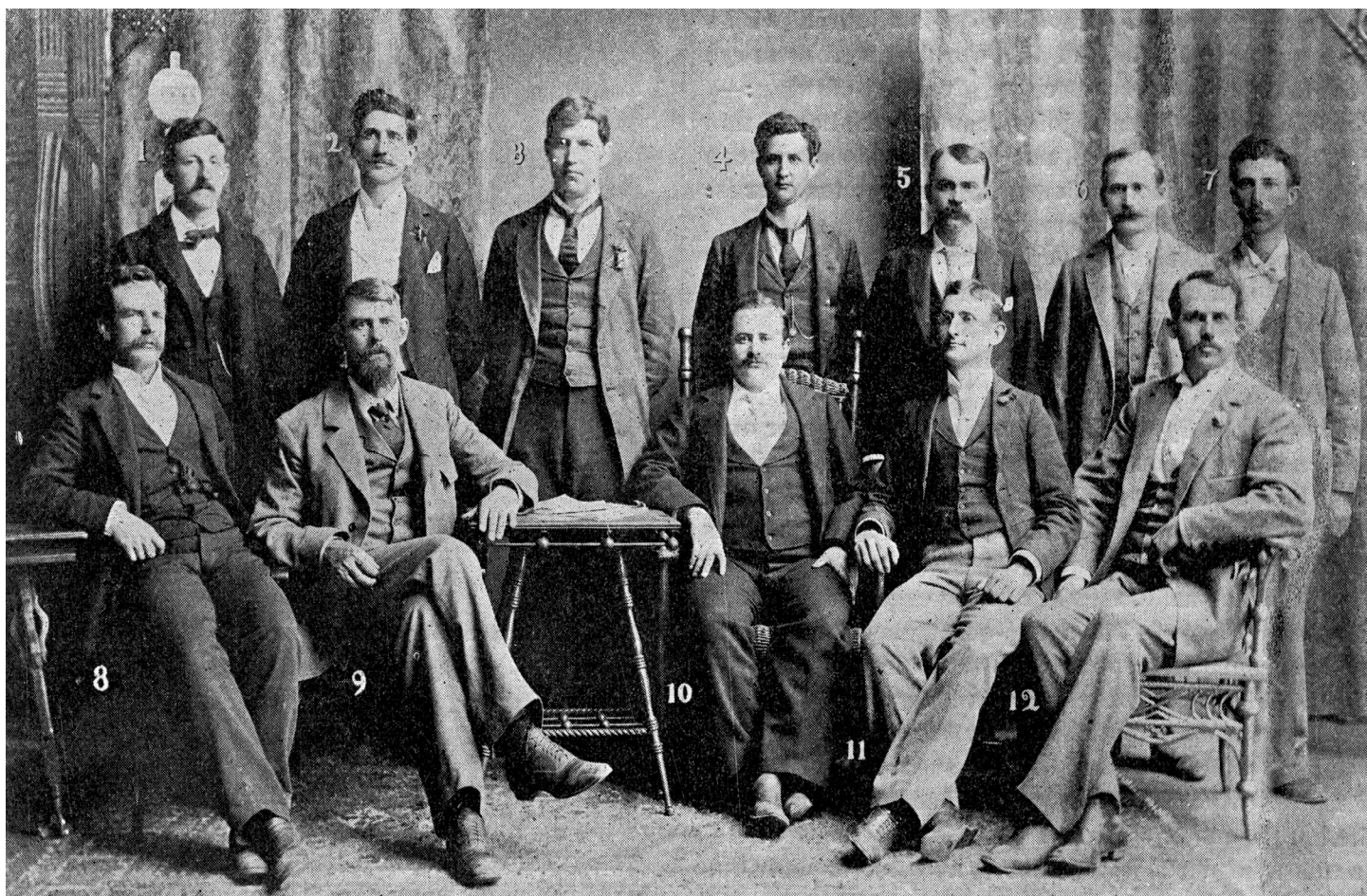
The author expresses appreciation for support to Shannon family member Kelly Shannon. Also, thanks to Jan Davis, Carol Williams, Linda Raulston, Linda Colbert, and Colleen Greene, professionals in the Archives and Records Division at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) in Oklahoma City, for their help.



Ober Lee and Rennie (Taylor) Shannon celebrating their fifty-ninth wedding anniversary with their twelve surviving children, January 1, 1955. Ober is sitting in the center and Rennie is sitting on his right side. From Kelly Shannon.

Bibliographic

Information and images for these biographies were collected from many sources, including autobiographies of Ober Lee Shannon and Rennie Taylor Shannon provided by Shannon family member Kelly Shannon, files at the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association (OPhA) office in Oklahoma City as well as various issues of Oklahoma Pharmacist, Meyer Brothers Druggist, Bulletin of Pharmacy, and newspapers from Vinita, Muskogee, and Durant, Oklahoma. United States census records have provided valuable family-related data. The ERA and Hayes Druggists directories have been used as aids to trace pharmacy locations and ownership in Oklahoma. Especially beneficial for biographical information have been pharmacist applications for licensure as well as records of the Oklahoma Territory, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma State Boards of Pharmacy located in the Archives and Records Division of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL).



Charter members of the Indian Territory Pharmaceutical Association at the inaugural meeting of the organization in Muskogee, Creek Nation, Indian Territory, May, 1895. William Orrick Shannon is seated second from the left. From Meyer Brothers Druggist, 16 (July, 1895): 283.